

Job Satisfaction and its Determinants among Development Agents (The case of North Gondar Zone: Amhara Region, Ethiopia)

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to identify the level of job satisfaction with extension agents and its determinant factors of North Gondar zone, Amhara region, Ethiopia with an objective of identifying factors that affects the level of satisfaction of Development Agents and to determine the level of their job satisfaction working in the study area at peasant association level. Data were collected from 118 Development Agents using self-administered questionnaire. Purposive sampling method was employed to select sample Woredas (Sub district) and simple random sampling with proportional probability to size was employed to select peasant association's Development Agents. The adapted standard instrument was used for the study. The results of the study most of the respondents 67 (57%) confirmed as they are satisfied with their job, while 41 (34.5%) of them confirmed their dissatisfaction. The study also revealed most of the respondents' perceived factors such as infrastructural facilities, workload, and remuneration and training opportunities are not satisfactory.

Key words: Job satisfaction, Development Agents, work facilities

INTRODUCTION

Most developing countries like Ethiopia have adopted agricultural extension service in rural farmers to significant increase agricultural production (Mathewos and Chandargi, 2005). One of the main interventions strategy used to increase productivity has been the policy direction in the form of *Agricultural Technology Scaling Up* as dimension of the national plan. This has been done by deploying a large number of Development Agents that are directly working with rural peasants (Gebremedhin et al., 2009). The Development Agents are not only supporting farmers but also train farmers on improved farming techniques and farm management (ibid). Development Agents are responsible to carry out several activities that aim at improving the standard of living of rural communities, (Alemu and Demese, 2005).

The study conducted by Ananda, et al. (2005) reveals that in addition to knowledge and skill transfer, Development Agents are liable to be involved in performing any duty which fulfills governmental policy at village level, be it supplying inputs, credit, transferring technology, and feedback inform to research workers, mobilizing local communities for group action to solve community-wide problems. Moreover, it also leads them to trying to do jobs for which they have neither the training nor the experience. The resultant pressure in being expected to do more than they are able to demoralize (Wiggins, 1986). These and other numerous roles that Development Agents are playing to signify a great load that they are shouldering and that demand brings a change in the whole process of agricultural and rural Development Agents.

Nonetheless, most of the Development Agents have been found having a significant difference in their performance, roles and satisfaction on their job (Ananda and et al., (2005).

The studying of development agent's job satisfaction and its determinants are important because the effectiveness of the entire agricultural program being implemented throughout the country is depending on Development Agents and the quality of the relationship between them and the extension works they do. Lack of proper awareness of the operational realities could have negative bearing on the level of satisfaction with the Development Agents on their jobs which could again influence their performance. Therefore, this study was designed with the objective of assessing factors that affect the level of job satisfaction with Development Agents working at Kebele level to accomplish their tasks.

Job satisfaction

According to Hornby and Cowie, (1995) ,“Job” refers to duty, task and/or paid position, or responsibility and the word “Satisfaction” connotes a feeling of pleasure, the attainment of wants and needs, deed of fulfilling desires and demand objectives . Job satisfaction is one’s emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to a task as a result of evaluation of its characteristics and related factors (Locke, 1976). According to Spector, (1997) job satisfaction is also mean people feeling about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs and it is the extent to which individuals’ liked or disliked their jobs. It is an employee’s sense of accomplishment and success on the job and perceived to be directly connected to productivity as well as to personal well-being (Kaliski, 2007). Job satisfaction implies that doing a task one enjoys, doing it well, being rewarded for one’s efforts and enthusiasm (ibid). According to Armstrong (2006), it refers to the attitude and feelings people have a positive and positive attitudes towards the job point to job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction from organization can be both extrinsic and intrinsic. The salary and promotion provided by the organization are extrinsic aspects of job satisfaction. Co-Workers, educational opportunities, organizational support, needs of accomplishment and recognition, and social support are the intrinsic aspects of job satisfaction (Koeske et al., 1994; Davis, 1996). Employees’ level of satisfaction with their job can range from extreme satisfaction to extreme dissatisfaction (George et al., 2008). According to Spector, (1997) job satisfaction has 14 facets: Appreciation, Communication, Fringe benefits, Co-workers, working conditions, Nature of the task, Organization, Personal growth, Policies and procedures, Recognition, Promotional opportunities, Job security and Supervision. People also can have attitudes to different aspects of their jobs such as the type of task they do, supervisors or subordinates, their co-workers, and pay (George et al., 2008). Employees with high job satisfaction level consider that working in their organization will be satisfying in the future that they will be concerned about the quality of their task, and that they will be committed to their organization (Banmeke & Ajayi 2005). Job satisfaction can be understood in terms of its relationships of key factors, such as, stress at work, employees’ general well-being, control at work, home-work interface, and working situation. Satisfaction denotes to a feeling of happiness, action of fulfilling desires the realization of wants and needs, and demand (Hornby and Cowie, 1995).

Determinants of Job Satisfaction

Though they carry out the same job in the same work environment and at the same time, almost all employees do not have the same level of satisfaction. Working environment and the nature of the job also determined the level of people satisfaction with their job (Near, Smith, Rice and Hunt (1984). Working conditions influenced non-work satisfaction and living conditions were considerably related to job satisfaction (ibid). Jennings, (1998) indicated that salary, benefits, job security, and the ability to retire from the organization are reasons that make an individual stay within an organization. Darlene and Borman (1989) also noted that working environment such as physical surroundings, job satisfaction and management supervision influence job performance. According to Hackman &

Oldham, (1976) Earlier in 1968 Herzberg proposed that individuals are encouraged by motivators such as accountability, and awards, accomplishment, or individual development more than maintenance factors that include position, employment, income, and benefits, but these factors do not provide satisfaction, though dissatisfaction occurs from their deficiency.

Job satisfaction for Development Agents

Job satisfaction with Development Agents connotes the feeling of fulfillment while performing their assigned tasks, (Oloruntoba and Ajayi, 2003). A situation that promotes lack of mobility, low morale, and low salaries characterized most of the developing countries. Nearly all Development Agents in developing countries are working under hard and dangerous conditions which led to job dissatisfaction and low performance (Nagel, 1997). To survive, Development Agents need additional income. Therefore, there is a high turnover rate. Those who remain in working as Development Agents are those people with few employment opportunities elsewhere (Kaimowitz, 1991).

The most fundamental role of agricultural supervisors is to ensure Development Agents have suitable attitude, motivation and perception about their job (Bennel and Zuidema, 1989). Supervisors' and colleagues' social support has been found to be both directly and indirectly related to increase security (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Workplace supports to reduce work-related job dissatisfaction, worsened mental health and improves employee well-being (Moyle, 1998).

According to Pursley, (1974). Where top managers dominated the managerial relations and do not support to employees, subordinates' job dissatisfaction is an inevitable result. According to Ellison, (2004), supervisors in charge of enforcing the practices and rules of the organization with employees are seen as important figures in the organization.

The supervisors' attitudes to subordinates are indicators of organizational support; because a supervisor, as a representative of the organization, has responsibility for managing and assessing employees' performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Behaviors of supervisor support are showing tolerance to employees that have difficulties with tasks, giving recognition of jobs well done, and providing incentives to perform better (Wicks, 2005). Even listening to employees' complaints about workplace stress is an important step for supervisors to ease employees' stress and it makes them feel better, although that does not change anything; (Ibid).

In this study, in order to assess Development Agents' job satisfaction facilities such as, free living house, office, transportation facility, enough demonstration fields, training room, training material and all weather roads to link the Kebele (village) with the Woreda is treated as determinant factors to satisfy Development Agents. In addition to that opportunity for career Development, work environment, relationship with their co-workers and relationship with their immediate superior are also treated as determining factors for their job satisfaction. The study also tries to assess the satisfaction with development agents in terms of other demographics.

The effect of determinates factor Development Agents job satisfaction

Development Agents were glad about their work more when they apply their capability to analyze a situation and reprogram (Riggs & Beus, 1993). In the studies of Cano and Miller (1992) and Jennings (1998), there was not a significant relationship between length of service and overall job satisfaction. In the study of Bowen, Radhakrishna, and Keyser, (1994) job satisfaction have a significant relationship to age. Younger and less experienced agents had lower levels of job satisfaction than older and more experienced agents.

McCaslin and Mwangi (1994) pointed out that constant, precise, and objective performance appraisal were essential to improve Development Agents' job satisfaction. According to them, a development agent's individual behavior were not as important for motivation as being job satisfaction factors. Riggs and Bues (1993), indicated that Development Agents overall job satisfaction were moderately associated with their attitudes to their co-workers and the organization. According to the study of Kaleb Kelemu, et al., (2014) with Development Agents working in different rural community of Kalu Woreda, there exists a statistically significant association with job satisfaction and recognition for best performances, rate of promotion, regular training in level of education of Development Agents.

A study by (Hackman and Oldham, 2005), reveals determinants of job satisfaction which ultimately determine the efficiency and effectiveness of employees. Perceptions of Development Agents about the fairness of performance appraisal, job security, equality of male and female agents, resource availability, and workload manageability are significantly affected by the time that agents worked in farmers' fields and by their satisfaction on the job (Mekbib and Degnet, 2011). The agricultural policy should contain elements that enhance motivation of Development Agents and initiate instruments that can bring step up in the perception of extension agents about their working environment (Ibid).

Therefore, agents must realize the different factors that influence their job satisfaction and that a reduction in one factor could lead to reduced job satisfaction. As this study was conducted in four Woredas (sub districts) in North Gondar, Ethiopia with 118 Development Agents only, the findings could not be generalized to the entire region. But, the study could give important insights that are indicative of the possible situations in other Woredas of the region.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Description of Study Area

The study was conducted based on the data collected from Development Agents working in three Woreda (Dembia, Wogera and Metema) is located in North zone Gondar of the Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from primary and secondary data sources. The target study population was 307 Development Agents in three Woredas of North Gondar zone. A self administered questionnaire was distributed among 300 Development Agents working in different peasant associations with four Woredas (sub districts). But only 119 workable questionnaires were collected.

To measure employee job satisfaction and determinants of job satisfaction are adapted from the original work of Wood et al. (1986) and also adopted from the work of Purani & Sahadev (2007) and literature. These items were rated on a five-point Likert type scales ranging from '1' "strongly disagree" - '5' "strongly disagree." The items of the respective factors of job satisfaction are computed as average scores for the data analysis purpose. This research instrument for job satisfaction has 31 items and its reliability was checked by means of Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha test result was found to be .825.

Result and Discussion

Development Agents' perception of Job related factors

Table 1 reveals that about 62 (52%) of Development Agents expression as they have a good career growth rate. Their working environment is busy and friendly 100 (84%). In addition to that, their perception of their relationship to coworker is good or very good 1006 (42-47%) and 109 (92%) of the respondents have good perception about their supervisor.

Table 1: perception Job related factors and job satisfaction level

Perception about their career growth rate		Frequency	Percent
	below average	3	2.5
	Average	34	28.6
	Good	62	52.1
	very good	20	16.8
Perception about their working environment		Frequency	Percent
	Stressful	13	10.9
	busy but friendly	100	84.0
	Relaxed	6	5.0
Perception about their relationship with their co workers		Frequency	Percent
	Fair	13	10.9
	Good	50	42.0
	very good	56	47.1
Perception their relationship with their superiors		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	109	91.6
	No	10	8.4
Development Agents' job satisfaction level		Frequency	Percent
	Disagree	41	34.5
	Neutral	10	8.5
	Agree	67	57

Development Agents level of Satisfaction

As it is clearly shown in table 1 Most of respondents 67 (57%) are satisfied with their job. only 41 (34.5%) of them expressed their dissatisfaction with their job.

Development Agents Satisfaction with Facilities

The majority of Development Agent 107 (90%) and 77 (64.7%) confirmed the availability of offices and all weather roads to link the Kebele with the Woreda respectively. However, 51-78 % of Development Agents admitted as they have a problem with free living house, Transportation facility, enough demonstration field, training room and training material.

Table 2: Development Agents satisfaction with the facilities

	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Free living house	33	27.7	86	72.3
Office	107	89.9	12	10.1
Transportation facility	12	10.1	74	62.2
Enough demonstration field	45	37.8	74	62.2
training room	58	48.7	61	51.3
Training material	26	21.8	93	78.2
All weather road to link the Kebele with the woreda	77	64.7	42	35.3

Conclusion

To ensure efficient utilization of human resources with the specific skills, attitudes and motivation that will allow the organizational objectives to be attained is important to make certain the job satisfaction

of agricultural workers that will help to enhance agricultural production. In this study it was hypothesized that only a very limited number of the Development Agents are serving the farmers as required. This can be proved that currently significant numbers of Development Agents had left their job to search for other works. It is expected that this may be due to their dissatisfaction with their jobs. Therefore, the study was undertaken to proof this organizational issue. Except office services and all the availability of weather roads; other basic infrastructures (such as, free living house, transportation facilities, demonstration site, training room and materials) are in a poor condition. However, the result of the study indicated majority of respondents (57%) confirmed as they are satisfied with their job, while 34.5% were confirmed their dissatisfaction and the remaining were neutral.

Workload as a variable has played a significant role in the job dissatisfaction of Development Agents. The majority of the respondents have voted that the amount of work to be performed by each development agent is more than his/her capacity. Development Agents are not only agricultural extension workers, but also tax collectors, work on loan repayments, agitating farmers to send their child to school and collaborate with security worker. In general, they are everything in their Kabul (village). Thus, Development Agents must be given the opportunity to work only what is specified in their job description.

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